



Fast Facts

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PAT COCKRELL RETIRES AFTER 36 YEARS

In June 1975, William Patrick Cockrell began his employment with Florida Farm Bureau. Thirty-six years later, on May 31, 2011, Pat is finally hanging up his saddle bag. And what a great 36 years it has been! His Farm Bureau career began as a field services representative. In 1978 he transferred to Commodity Activities as an assistant director and, following the division's name change, became director of Ag Policy. He served as executive director of organizations and programs before being named assistant to the president a few years ago. Prior to his career with Farm Bureau, Pat was a vocational agriculture teacher and was recognized as one of five Outstanding Young Teachers in the Nation. He received an Honorary American FFA Degree in 2000; the IFAS Scholar Award in 2001; the UF/CALS Distinguished Alumnus Award in 2006; the Florida FFA Blue and Gold Award in 2007; and the Florida Association of Career and Technical Education Hall of Fame Award in 2008. **This past February Pat was honored by his induction into the most prestigious Florida Agricultural Hall of Fame.** Despite numerous health challenges during the past several years, Pat has maintained a work schedule and dedication to duty that will serve as a model for all those who come after him. Pat and his wife, Janice, have been a true Farm Bureau couple since they met at a county Women's Meeting where he was speaking nearly 33 years ago. They have five children and seven grandchildren. Congratulations and Godspeed, Pat Cockrell. Come back and see us often.

MORGAN AND CRAFT PROMOTED

Kevin M. Morgan has been promoted to executive assistant to the president for Florida Farm Bureau Federation. He will serve as administrator and provide leadership for Florida Farm Bureau's senior management team in the absence of **FFB President John Hoblick.** Morgan brings 27 years of Farm Bureau experience to his new position, including exemplary service in three different divisions – Field Services, Ag Policy and the Executive Office. He has served as the young farmer and rancher and women's coordinator, director of ag policy and most recently as executive director. • • • **Joshua Craft** has been promoted to director of field services for Florida Farm Bureau Federation. He will manage all programs and activities currently assigned to Field Services, including eight Assistant Directors who serve as the liaison between the 60 County Farm Bureaus and the Florida Farm Bureau, the YF&R and Women's Programs and the Member Benefits Program. Craft comes from the Ag Policy Division where he was the lead staff person on issues concerning farm labor, pesticides and food safety.

THIS YEAR'S SESSION ONE OF BEST EVER

FFB Director of Legislative Affairs Ben Parks reports that the 2011 legislative session ended in the wee hours of the morning on Saturday, May 7. Parks said that when all was said and done, it was one of the best sessions for business in recent memory. Florida Farm Bureau, said Parks, wants to thank its members who contacted legislators and their staffs on its issues. Their volunteer leadership service gave Farm Bureau a powerful voice at the state capitol. A summary of legislative activities can be found in Parks' "Tallahassee Report" in the June and (upcoming) July issues of *FloridAgriculture* magazine.

NEWS FROM THE SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

FFB Assistant Director of Government and Community Affairs Charles Shinn reports on these news items from the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD): Gov. Rick Scott has appointed five members to the SFWMD governing board. They include **Daniel DeLisi, Jim Moran, Daniel O'Keefe, Timothy Sargent and Glenn Waldman.** The appointments fill all but one expired seat on the Governing Board. DeLisi is a self-employed planning and engineering consultant from Lee County. Moran is a self-employed attorney from West Palm Beach. O'Keefe is an attorney with Shutts and Bowan LLP in Windermere. Sargent is the director of tax and operating company chief financial officer, Huizenga Holdings Inc. in Ft. Lauderdale. Waldman is a self-employed attorney in Weston. • • • Past governing board member, **Melissa Meeker,** was unanimously elected by the board to become the new executive director, replacing **Carol Wehle** who resigned in April.

NEWS FROM THE ST. JOHNS RIVER WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

FFB Assistant Director of Government and Community Affairs Curt Williams reports on these news items from the St. Johns River Water Management District (SJRWMD): Gov. Rick Scott has announced the appointments of **Lowry "Lad" Daniels** and **Charles "Chuck" Drake** to the SJRWMD

governing board. Daniels, 72, is the president of Daniels and Associates and resides in Jacksonville. Drake, 52, is a hydrogeologist and senior manager for Tetra Tech Inc., and resides in Orlando. • • • **The SJRWMD continues to move forward with the development of their Agricultural Assistance Team, or Ag-Team.** The Ag-Team has expressed intent to consolidate the current Environmental Resource Permit (ERP) and the Consumptive Use Permit (CUP), to make the permitting process much more applicant friendly. The end result will mean faster permit approval, along with a familiar and consistent district staff member who will work on the permit throughout the entire process. On June 30 the SJRWMD Ag-Team will host an ERP/CUP efficiency workshop for growers at the Hastings IFAS Extension Office from 10 a.m. until noon. Anyone with questions can contact Williams at (352) 316-2685.

FLORIDA MINIMUM WAGE IS RISING

In response to a recent Circuit Court decision, the Florida Agency for Workforce Innovation has announced that, effective June 1, 2011, the Florida minimum wage will increase to \$7.31 per hour. With this increase, Florida will once again exceed the federal minimum wage, and employers operating within the state will be required to comply with the higher standard.

STILL TIME TO REGISTER FOR YF&R CONFERENCE

The 2011 State YF&R Leadership Conference will be held July 15 - 17 at the Hilton Melbourne Beach Oceanfront in Indialantic. The Florida Farm Bureau YF&R Leadership Program is offering Young Farmers and Ranchers across the state the opportunity to apply for scholarships to attend this year's event. Only one scholarship will be granted per field district and applications are due by June 15. Registration and scholarship information is now available. For more information contact **Shaun Fulford** at (352) 378-8100, ext. 1030.

SWIFTMUD approves projects on five farms

The Southwest Florida Water Management District's governing board has approved \$1.9 million in funding for projects that will help reduce groundwater withdrawals in eastern Hillsborough County by 550,000 gallons per day and 18 million gallons for frost/freeze protection. All five projects are located on strawberry farms within the proposed Dover/Plant City Water Use Caution Area. During the 11-day January 2010 freeze event, the combined pumping of Dover-area farmers dropped the aquifer level 60 feet in some locations, resulting in 140 sinkholes and impacting more than 750 wells. The district developed a management strategy with incentives to reduce groundwater use over time, well construction standards and regulatory limitations on water use in the area. To implement one component of the strategy, the board voted to create a new water use caution area in the Dover/Plant City area. The projects are funded under the District's Facilitating Agricultural Resource Management Systems (FARMS) Program, an agricultural cost-share reimbursement program that conserves water and protects water quality. Funding is being provided by the district's governing board and the Alafia River basin board.

SSA RESUMES SENDING OUT "NO-MATCH" LETTERS

FFB Director of Field Services Joshua Craft reports that the Social Security Administration (SSA) has resumed sending out No-Match letters to employers. This ends a long break that started when the Department of Homeland Security's 2007 no-match regulation (now rescinded) was blocked by a court. SSA's new letter says that the recipient is not required to respond, and that the letter alone should not be the basis for taking any adverse action against the employee listed. If you do respond to the letter, the SSA may share the information with the Internal Revenue Service or the Department of Justice.

AG MUSEUM TO HONOR MILITARY

The Florida Agricultural Museum is offering free tours this weekend to active military personnel and veterans in recognition of their service and in sincere appreciation of their contributions to our country. Simply show your military ID card and your tour will be free anytime between Saturday, May 28 and Monday, May 30. The museum will be open on Monday in honor of the day. Family members will be charged regular tour rates: \$8 for adults, \$6 for children. For tour information visit the museum website at <http://www.MyAgMuseum.com> or call (386) 446-7630.

CERTIFICATION COURSES TO BE MADE AVAILABLE

The nationally recognized Golf and Landscape Operations department at Florida Gateway College (formerly Lake City Community College) will be offering online courses in Principles of Plant Growth (botany) and Agricultural Chemistry starting the fall semester, 2011. The department plans to continue developing online courses in the horticulture area that will lead to state recognized certificates. These courses would be appropriate for advanced high school students who are eligible to take these classes as dual enrollment and for employees working in the golf and landscape industries who need basic horticulture education to add to the practical training available on the job. For more information, please contact **John R. Piersol** at (386) 754-4225 or john.piersol@fgc.edu.